



Washington State Department of Agriculture News Release

For immediate release: March 12, 2003 (03-16)
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WASHINGTON STATE DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
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Sign up by March 24 for free pesticide disposal at Yakima

OLYMPIA — Residents, farmers, business owners and public agencies can safely dispose of old or unusable agricultural and commercial grade pesticides without paying any hazardous waste disposal fees. The state Department of Agriculture (WSDA) will host a collection event May 6 near Yakima. To participate, you must sign up by March 24.

Because walk-in customers cannot be served, only those who sign up by March 24 will receive directions to the site, hours of operation, and needed transportation documents. To sign up, call (360) 902-2056, toll free 1-877-301-4555 or send e-mail to wastepesticide@agr.wa.gov.

Pesticides accepted by WSDA include insecticides, herbicides, fungicides, rodenticides and most chemicals that kill, repel or prevent unwanted pests. Empty containers and other waste, such as fertilizers, motor oil and household hazardous waste are not accepted for disposal by this program. For information on how to dispose or recycle these other items, contact your local solid waste department. In Benton County call (509) 942-7387; in Kittitas County, call (509) 962-7542 or in Yakima County call (509) 574-2472. In addition, NW Ag Plastics, Inc. (509-952-7146 or www.nwagplastics.com) operates a free empty plastic pesticide container recycling program.

Leaky containers or improper pesticide disposal may create serious health problems for humans and animals, contaminate drinking water supplies or cause significant environmental damage. It is also very expensive and difficult to clean up contaminated soil or groundwater. These problems can be prevented by proper disposal of pesticides that are no longer needed. WSDA will provide customers with supplies necessary to protect broken or leaky containers to ensure safe transportation to the collection site.

WSDA also provides a disposal opportunity for persons who are quitting business or selling property and are stuck with pesticides they will never use. In some cases, a storage room containing pesticides can delay a property transaction.

"We also hope to reach new property owners who may find barrels, bottles or cans of unknown substances left behind by the previous owner," said Joe Hoffman, WSDA disposal program coordinator. "A mystery container with unknown contents may be the most hazardous feature of your new property, especially if you have curious

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children or the container is leaking. We will help to identify the contents and, if it is a pesticide, we will arrange to have it removed at no cost to you."

Customers transport unusable agricultural and commercial grade pesticides to the collection site where WSDA takes possession of them and a hazardous waste contractor packs them for safe and legal transportation and disposal. WSDA oversees collection in cooperation with local agencies.

"We are responsible for the pesticides once we take possession of them," Hoffman added. "We become the owner of the pesticides before they are turned over to the contractor. Customer names do not appear on any manifests or disposal documents. That is significant because, in most cases, owners of hazardous materials are responsible for life for the cost of disposal or any environmental cleanup that may be needed should a transportation accident or disposal site release occur."

WSDA has sponsored regional collection events at various locations around the state since the program began in 1988. To date, 4,424 customers have properly disposed of more than 1,389,500 pounds of waste pesticides.

In addition to calling or using e-mail to sign up for the Yakima event, you may write to the Waste Pesticide Program, Washington State Department of Agriculture, PO Box 42589, Olympia, WA 98504-2589. For more information, visit WSDA's Web site at <http://ag.wa.gov/PestFert/EnvResources/WastePesticide.htm>.

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